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# homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE

Friday, July 25, 1941

Subject: "SQUASHES." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Today I'd like to talk about summer squashes--the vegetables that travel under an assumed name. You see, summer "squashes" are really "pumpkins"--or so the botanists insist. But as far as I'm concerned, it's a lot easier to talk about "squashes."

And there's plenty to say because there are so many different summer squashes.

First there's the cymling--the small, flat squash with deep scallops around the edge. It has a soft, smooth rind--and it's pale green or white in color. Perhaps you know the cymling by some of its other names. It's often called a "scallop" or "pattypan" because of its flat, scalloped shape.

Then there are the yellow summer squashes--and they come in both the giant and the dwarf sizes. The typical yellow squash has a rough skin and a crooked neck. But the plant scientists have been breeding to straighten the neck. That way it packs better and it's easier to ship.

Vegetable marrows are another type of squash. You don't hear much about them here in America--but they're one of the good old standbys in England. A marrow is shaped like an egg that has been stretched out lengthwise--if you can imagine that. The marrows are either green or creamy white in color.

One of the vegetable marrows is the Zucchini. It's a native of Italy, and now it flourishes on the west coast of the United States. The Zucchini is so long and slender that you might almost mistake it for a cucumber.

But when it comes to talking about food value--the name of the squash or its shape doesn't make as much difference as the color of its flesh. Let me read you a statement about the food value of squashes from home economists in the U. S.



Department of Agriculture. They say ---

"All summer squashes furnish some vitamins, but the yellow-fleshed ones rank highest with the nutritionists. That's because the yellow color of the flesh is a sign that the squashes are a source of vitamin A."

And here's a tip for selecting squashes--on the vine or on the market. The experts say ---

"When you pick your squashes--try to get those that are heavy for their size and fresh looking. And remember that you usually cook summer squashes without paring them. So be sure the rind is soft and free from marks or bruises."

Speaking of cooking--of course that's something you have to know how to do if you really want the squashes you select to be appreciated--and if you want their food value to do any good. Here's what the home economists say about that.

"You can cook squashes by any of the standard methods used for other vegetables. And of all these methods--boiling is the simplest. When you boil the squash--wash the rind off thoroughly first. Then cut the squash into small pieces. Drop these small pieces into lightly salted, boiling water. But here's a word of warning. Don't add a lot of water to squashes when you boil them. Remember that summer squashes have quite a bit of water in them. So add just enough to keep the pieces of squash from scorching as they cook.

"Simmer squash for about 15 minutes--or until it is tender. And serve it up with plenty of butter, bacon drippings, or other fat--besides salt and pepper and seasoning."

I think one of the best ways to cook a watery vegetable such as squash is to pan it. That is, you cook the vegetable in a little fat and add no water. Here are the full directions.

"Wash the squash first. Then cut it in small pieces. Leave the rind on unless the rind is very tough. Melt some butter or bacon fat--or some other well-



flavored fat in a heavy skillet. Use just enough to keep the squash from sticking to the pan--no more. Add the squash to the melted fat. Cover the pan with a lid and cook the squash at moderate heat in this covered pan for 10 to 15 minutes. Take the cover off after that time and cook the squash a little longer to let the liquid that cooks out of the squash evaporate."

Now--going on down the list of good ways to cook squash--you might like to serve it fried. All you have to do is to wash the squash and cut it in thin, even slices. Sprinkle these slices with salt and a little flour. Then fry the slices in shallow fat. Or--you might like to dip the pieces of squash in batter and dry them in deep or shallow fat. Fry them a golden brown and serve them while they're hot and crisp.

Another dish that's hard to beat is scalloped squash. For this, use squash leftovers--or fresh squash--it doesn't matter. And use it either by itself or with other vegetables. Squash and tomatoes in a scalloped dish make an interesting combination. To make this--you start by cooking chopped onion, green pepper, and other seasonings in a little fat. Then you add tomatoes, and finally the squash. Cook this on top of the stove for a short time--then finish in a moderate oven.

Another standard way to cook squash is to bake it. For a fancy dinner sometime you might like to capitalize on the pretty scalloped shape of cymlings or patty-pans. Scoop out the pulp from the squash, chop up this pulp, and mix it with tomato and seasonings. Boil the cymling shell a few minutes. Then pack the seasoned pulp back into it. Top it with buttered breadcrumbs and bake in a moderate oven until the crumbs are brown. Serve the baked squash in its own "shell." If it's a large squash, cut the shell into individual pie-shaped pieces. If the squashes are small, make each one as an individual serving.

I haven't time to pass on to you any more cooking directions for the different varieties of summer squash. But I'm sure you already know or will think of a number of other appetizing ways to serve them once you really get acquainted with the big summer squash family.

